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THE WASHINGTON STAR (GREEN LINE)
14 June 1977

Turner Bars CIA From Hiring Military Retirees

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Federal Column

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Adm. Stansfield Turner, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, has issued an order barring the agency from hiring military retirees.

The order also bars the hiring of civil service and foreign service retirees.

Turner's action prompted speculation that his move was a trial balloon which could lead to similar actions by other federal departments and agencies. Turner is very close to President Carter, who has spoken out against "double dipping" by retired military and has appointed a commission on military compensation to make recommendations on the subject.

The CIA was able to issue such an order because it is not under civil service. Departments and agencies under civil service would require legislation in order to bar hiring of retired military personnel. A House Defense Appropriations subcommittee recently approved a provision requiring retired military personnel in federal civilian jobs hired after next Oct. 1 to give up their military pay but it did not bar such hirings per se.

There would be nothing to prevent non-civil service agencies such as the FBI, Defense Intelligence Agency and others from following the CIA's lead in barring the hiring of retired military except in special cases. And it could give impetus to a legislative move to give other federal departments and agencies similar authority. Whether this would be a constitutional abridgement of the rights of retired military personnel could become a legal issue.

TURNER'S ORDER, first disclosed by Alan Horton of Scripps-Howard newspapers, is designed to increase promotion opportunities and career advancement for non-military CIA careerists and to guarantee what he called a "steady accession of new career talent."

The order does not apply to retired military or other types of federal retirees already on the CIA payroll. It's estimated that there are hundreds of retired military among the CIA's 15,000 employees. There also are a considerable

Horton quotes a retired major general as saying, "Admiral Turner has deprived himself of an awful lot of talent." A senior colonel said, "It is not exactly the American way to deny jobs to men and women just because they have served their country. It's particularly irksome to have this done by a military man."

Turner's order not only will prevent direct hiring of double-dippers, but also will prevent in most cases the hiring of CIA and military retirees as "consultants, translators, or contractors."

While CIA careerists generally were delighted with the order, some said it also should have applied to double-dippers already on the CIA payroll. They noted that Turner last March hired as a top aide a retired Navy captain who now draws more than \$60,000 a year in civilian pay and military pension.

OFFICERS OF THE National Association of Retired Federal Employees (NARFE) will confer Friday with White House officials on the group's proposed legislation to give federal and postal retirees a 15 percent tax credit based on the maximum Social Security individual benefit. At present the maximum Social Security benefit is close to \$6,000. Social Security benefits are non-taxable.

NARFE officials would like to get White House support for the proposal before such legislation is sponsored in Congress. A number of senators and representatives reportedly are ready to sponsor such a measure.

It is felt that Congress would be more responsive to a tax credit proposal rather than an outright tax exemption. Congress usually deals with tax matters on a tax credit basis. Also, such an approach would give a better break percentage-wise to lower income retirees.

A 15 percent tax credit would work as follows: A retiree, let's say, had a

federal income tax bill of \$4,000. The maximum Social Security benefit, for example, was \$6,000. Fifteen percent of \$6,000 is \$900. This \$900 would be subtracted from the \$4,000 tax owed and the retiree's tax bill thus would be \$3,100.

PRESIDENT CARTER'S much publicized Inauguration Day walk down Pennsylvania Avenue may become a habit if the White House doesn't cooperate more fully with Congress on authorization justification for its expenditures. And he may be flying coach to Plains via Eastern Airlines.

At the urging of Reps. Patricia Schroeder, D-Colo., and Herbert E. Harris, D-Va., the House as part of the executive office appropriation bill deleted the \$17.5 million requested for the President's staff's limousines and travel. Funds also were denied for White House maintenance and the vice president's travel and staff expenses.

If the Senate goes along with the House, the White House will have to submit authorization justifications, as required by law, if it wants to get its money. For years the White House and the Congress have battled over its refusal to justify its requests.

Despite Carter's campaign pledge to reduce the number of White House employees, the staff has increased. Tongue in cheek, Harris and Schroeder said their action will "help Carter fulfill his campaign promise."